

Anna in the Tropics: Costumes and Character Development

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Theatre has existed in some form for nearly all of history. Costume design is no different. Through an effective costume design it is possible to explore depths of character and character development that are not evident at the surface of a script. *Anna in the Tropics* written in 2002 by Nilo Cruz is the story of a group of Cuban-American cigar-rollers living in 1929 Ybor City, Florida. In order to effectively design costumes for this show a thorough and detailed character analysis had to be done. In this text I examine each of the named characters in *Anna in the Tropics*, and explore the choices I made for the final production. In addition, I also briefly discuss the costume development for an added movement ensemble.

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Process Analysis Statement

Written in 2002 by Nilo Cruz, *Anna in the Tropics* examines the lives of a group of Cuban-American cigar-rollers living in 1929 Ybor City, Florida. Part of the tradition of cigar rolling included the presence of a lector, who would read to the workers daily. In *Anna in the Tropics* when the new lector arrives, his presence disrupts the worker's lives. The new lector, Juan Julian, arrives in Florida in the midst of a hot summer and begins to read *Anna Karenina* to the factory workers. As the show progresses, Juan Julian reads passages from *Anna Karenina* that foreshadow events in the family's lives. Listening to *Anna Karenina* allows the family freedom to explore new parts of themselves and each other ultimately leading to the strengthening or disintegration of their relationships.

As my title indicates, costume design is about character development and discovery. An effective design can communicate to both the actor and the audience information about the character, information that sometimes the character might not realize about themselves. Costumes are an important piece of any production; they can communicate social status, economic level, personality, and character type without any words. An effective costume design will inform the audience of character traits, often subconsciously. As a costume designer, it is important to understand not only how the character acts when they are alone, but when they are around others. An effective costume designer also needs to analyze and create meaning about character from how each character interacts with each other, and how they treat themselves. Reading into the subtext of a script is also essential to creating a cohesive and effective design.

After the costume designer examines the script alone and establishes the basic needs of the show, the creative team meets with the director to establish the director's

concept. For *Anna in the Tropics*, Veronica wanted to explore the way that “love formed between the cracks.” She also gave us a list of themes to explore while designing for the world we needed to create. They were: lost traditions, the power of language and literature, and nature versus machines. After meeting with the team and hearing Veronica’s direction for *Anna in the Tropics*, I began to dive into the ideas of lost traditions and traditional culture versus modernity. These themes were particularly important as the playwright’s note states: “After 1931, the lectors were removed from the factories, and what remained of the cigar rollers consisted of low-paid American workers who operated machines. The end of a tradition,” (Cruz 6). I wanted to use the script analysis skills I have learned throughout my four years to create a costume design that balanced all the aspects as mentioned above of a successful design. I began researching, and the design grew from there. Working in this way, from the director through to the design team is what creates the cohesiveness of a great production and what separates a show that is just good from one that is great.

Ball State’s Department of Theatre and Dance’s production of *Anna in the Tropics* was unique because the director, Veronica Santoyo, in consultation with Department Chair and Artistic Director, William Jenkins, decided that to create a more fully realized world an eight-person movement ensemble would be added to the cast. *Anna in the Tropics* is traditionally an eight-person cast consisting of the family who owns the cigar factory, their spouses, the new lector, and a cock-fight running bookie. While the story exists without the additional cast members, their presence allowed the creative team to immerse the

audience more fully in the culture of Cuban-American immigrants and their lives outside of factory work.

The initial introduction to the named characters in *Anna in the Tropics* is on the fifth page of the script. There are brief descriptions of each character, which include their ages and relationship to the patriarch of the family, Santiago Alcalar. The information that Cruz included at the beginning of the script is fairly standard and does not provide much more than what you might be able to learn from seeing someone on the street. On the page, following the character description Cruz includes a brief overview of relevant information regarding the time, place, set, costumes, and his playwright's note. Cruz writes that "These workers are always well dressed. They use a lot of white and beige linen, and their clothes are always well pressed and starched," (Cruz 6). I knew that to create a successful design I needed to dive into the text with Veronica's concept and themes in mind and find out everything I could about each character.

Beginning with the patriarch of the family, Santiago is listed as "owner of a cigar factory, late fifties," (Cruz 5). The audience quickly realizes that Santiago has a gambling problem, as the show opens with him and his half-brother Cheché at the local cockfights. According to the script, "They've been drinking, but are not drunk," (Cruz 9). Santiago immediately bets one hundred dollars on a rooster, sees that Cheché is also betting and ups his. This scene played in tandem with the harbor scene where the ladies are waiting for a ship to arrive. As the cockfighting progresses Santiago begs Cheché to lend him 200 dollars, saying "Come on, you've got the lucky money! With your lucky money I'll show you what I can do," (Cruz 13). The scene ends with Santiago ultimately borrowing an unknown

amount of money from Cheché. However, in the next scene, the audience finds out that it is “a lot of money,” money that the Alcarar’s just do not have (Cruz 25). In the final moments of the cockfighting scene, Santiago hastily offers Cheché another share of the factory if Santiago does not repay Cheché. From these small scenes, it is clear that Santiago has a gambling problem and he is willing to risk his entire livelihood for a chance to bet on a cockfight. I also noted that Santiago is close with his half-brother and that they share a sort of sibling rivalry. To communicate this into Santiago’s costume, I decided to dress him in a fedora and tie, in addition to his base costume of a white shirt and light brown pants, to communicate that he likes to partake in some of the finer aspects of life, such as gambling and drinking during Prohibition. The hat and tie communicate to the audience that Santiago is concerned with his public image as well, he wants to look nicer than anyone else in the scene to convey his status as the owner of one of the local cigar factories. After this brief introduction, Santiago is absent until Act 1, Scene 4 when he and his wife are fighting about the money he spent gambling and the shares of the factory he foolishly tried to give to Cheché. During his absence the factory seems to run smoothly, implying that Santiago missing work for days at a time is not far out of the range of normal behavior for him. When the audience sees Santiago the next time, he has an argument with Ofelia, his wife, where Marela, his youngest daughter, is the mediator who eventually gets fed up with her parents nonsense and leaves. During the fighting Santiago yells that he plans to sell his wedding ring, as his finger has gone numb from wearing it all the time. In this scene, he is in his shirt with the top two buttons undone, and the sleeves rolled up to indicate his stress about the current situation. He has lost his hat and tie because in this scene he is broken, he

breaks down and apologizes to Ofelia for his behavior and vows to take better care of the factory in the future. "I've acted like a fool, Ofelia. I'm ashamed of myself and I'm angry and bitter," (Cruz 39). This quote is an example of one character's growth throughout *Anna in the Tropics*. Often, when people or characters say they are going to change they do not follow through, but Santiago does. The next time the audience sees him going into work at the factory he has on his tie again and repays Cheché saying, "Here's your money. I got a loan, Cheché. This time I'm betting my money on the factory," (Cruz 56). During this scene, Santiago also reveals that the factory will be making a new cigar called the *Anna Karenina* to revitalize the company. With his behavior in this scene it is clear that Santiago is done putting the future of the factory in danger, and from here until the end of the show he is composed and put together, an exemplary factory owner and patriarch. In Act 2, Scene 3 Santiago and Ofelia decide to throw a party for the factory workers to celebrate the launch of the *Anna Karenina* cigar into the market. For this scene, Santiago and most of the men wear guayaberas, a traditional "cultural icon of masculine elegance, the all-purpose shirt to menswear," ("Cuban Guayaberas"). He also wears his fedora from the opening scene of the show, to reestablish his power and role as owner of the cigar factory. After the party, he returns to his regular button-down shirt and tie for the remainder of the show. Overall, his costumes were very traditional because Santiago is a traditional character. He does not like to disrupt the status quo or the balance in the factory.

Ofelia is described as "Santiago's wife, fifties," (Cruz 5). While this description seems to relegate her to an inferior position to Santiago, she is the backbone of the family. In the opening scene, Ofelia is at a harbor with her two daughters waiting for the lector's ship to

arrive. She establishes her authority almost immediately saying, "Doesn't your father spend his money gambling? Then I'll do as I wish with my money. I'll spend my money on the best lector we can get," (Cruz 11). Throughout the scene she continues to establish her role as the leader of the family, she playfully chastises her younger daughter, Marela, for using a spell she learned from the palm reader. Ofelia is constantly reminding Marela that she needs to keep her feet on the ground and focus on her life, in a later scene Ofelia tells Marela, "But we have to take a yardstick and measure our dreams," (Cruz 29). As a mother, she is always trying to push her children to have a better life than she did, and due to her traditional ideas, she only knows the ways of hard work and perseverance. In the opening scene, the audience sees Ofelia in an orange and tan dress that has a drop-waist that resembles an apron, which I chose to give a nod to her role as the caretaker of the family. Her dress was muted in color in part because of the introductory costume notes such as, "...a lot of white and beige linen," Cruz gave at the beginning of the script but also because she is older, and would have followed older fashion trends rather than adopting newer American styles. Because of her nurturing nature, I also realized that she would rather give her children newer and nicer clothes before she bought something for herself. She, like Santiago, is a representation of the traditional aspect of Cuban culture. As an immigrant to Florida, Ofelia and Santiago find their roots in the island of Cuba and therefore dress in that style. She also wears a white hat with a gardenia, which was necessitated by the script. She remarks that Juan Julian will be able to recognize her because "I told him my hat would have a gardenia," (Cruz 17). She also carries a small white handbag and lacy handkerchief that she waves at the approaching ship. Ofelia is almost always on stage during the show;

she is always involved with the day to day running of the factory. Ofelia is a character who takes charge because her husband is struggling to hold the family together. She takes charge of hiring the new lector and does not hesitate to criticize Cheché at most opportunities. When Cheché complains about *Anna Karenina* being a tragic love story she tells him, "Only a fool can fail to understand the importance of having a lector read to us while we work...When I lived in Havana, I don't remember ever seeing a tobacco factory without a lector," (Cruz 27). This quote again is a reference to her being a traditional character, one who fondly remembers her time in Cuba and who is unwilling to give up her cultural traditions. She is also a no-nonsense kind of person and her costume reflects that it is simple with few frills. Her only costume change was for the party in Act 2, Scene 3. For the party, I chose to put her in a blue dress with embroidered detailing around the neckline, a fringed shawl and a white gardenia placed behind her ear. After a discussion with Veronica, we decided that for Ofelia's character she needed a costume change into the party because the it is a big celebration that is honoring the revitalization of the Alcalar Cigar Company, and the launch of a new cigar brand. Again, like her base dress, the shape followed older styles and was a more muted color because Ofelia is a behind the scenes kind of person. Ofelia's costumes embodied the empathetic, maternal caretaker that she is while also portraying her strength.

Marela is the youngest and most highly spirited character in *Anna in the Tropics*. She is described as "Ofelia and Santiago's daughter, twenty-two," (Cruz 5). Marela is young, naive, and a dreamer. In the opening scene, she is so excited for the lector to arrive that she urinates on herself. In Ball State's production, Veronica was interested in seeing Marela

urinate onstage, so I took this opportunity to collaborate with the props master, Gavin Mosier, to create a bladder that would allow her to relieve herself onstage consistently every night. Gavin and I worked together to create the bladder from an I.V. bag, tape, and tubing. Her naivety comes out when she tells Cheché's personal business to Juan Julian without any thought for the consequences. In the same scene, she says to Conchita, "...everything in life dreams. A bicycle dreams of becoming a boy, an umbrella dreams of becoming the rain, a pearl dreams of becoming a woman, and a chair dreams of becoming a gazelle and running back to the forest," (Cruz 30). After listening to Juan Julian read *Anna Karenina* Marela dreams of going to Russia and dancing. Because of her bright and ethereal personality, I decided that she should be in yellow, it was the brightest garment in the show and made her seem like a personal ray of sunshine. In color theory, yellow is described as being "associated with joy, happiness, intellect, and energy," ("Color Wheel Pro: Color Theory"). I also chose to use nicer quality fabrics to build her dress because she is constantly dreaming of escaping the factory and living a more fancy life, so she seems as if she is always ready to go out. I chose cambric with chiffon accents, to give her dress a flowing and flirty nature. Because of her whimsical nature when it comes to her dress for the party she is described as looking like "Anna on the night of the ball," (Cruz 71). I knew that this meant that her party costume had to be spectacular. I ended up deciding on a black drop waist dress with a pleated skirt, to which I added a black sparkle collar, that I built from sequined trim. I also used this trim to create edging around the sleeves of the dress. I also added a black lacy slip that peeked out of her collar that I covered with pearl trim to suggest she was wearing a necklace. She also wore a pearl headband and an upper

arm rhinestone cuff to complete her look. She was the star of the party with her look. After the party, however, Cheché rapes her and she wears a fur coat for the rest of the show. She says "Some coats keep winter inside them. You wear them and you find pockets full of December, January, and February. All those months that cover the earth with snow and make everything still. That's how I want to be, layered and still," (Cruz 80). In this final scene, Marela has lost her innocence and light-heartedness.

Conchita is listed as "her [Marela's] sister, thirty-two," (Cruz 5). While the way Conchita is described makes her seem like an unimportant character, she is the protagonist of this story; the audience follows her narrative through her unhappy marriage, into her less unhappy affair, and finally into her hopeful marriage. Conchita tries to find humor in everyday interactions, in the opening scene Conchita tells Marela a story about a girl who used a spell and made her life terrible, but in a way to poke fun at her sister, not upset her. The first time the audience is given a look into Conchita's unhappiness is in Act 1, Scene 3, the scene in which she first hears *Anna Karenina*. After Juan Julian is done reading for the day the ladies discuss the passage, and Conchita explains to Marela why Anna's affair is hurting not only her spouse but Anna and the lover too. Conchita says that Anna has "...no choice. It's something she can't escape. That's why the author describes love as a thief," (Cruz 29). Subtextually, Conchita has already forgiven Palomo for having an affair, because of the book she believes that he has no choice but to follow his heart. The next thing that changes her life is Act 1, Scene 5, in this scene Conchita explains to Juan Julian a Cuban tradition of cutting her hair once a year and its symbolism culturally. After that, she explains that her father buries the hair every year. Juan Julian wonders why her husband

does not bury the hair saying "It should be an honor for any man..." (Cruz 44). Conchita then asks him to cut her hair and bury it "because you offer to. And you are the reader of the love stories, and anybody who dedicates his life to reading books believes in rescuing things from the oblivion," (Cruz 44). In this passage, Conchita reveals her deep sadness and her low self-worth, and her desire to be rescued. From what she has revealed about herself through her words and her perceptions of herself I deduced that she is an old soul, a romantic who loves the traditions of her culture and is deeply sad. The combination of these traits was the motivation for her costume. For her base look she wears a longer navy floral skirt that I modeled after Spanish style skirts with a ruffle on the bottom, and a cream shirt with a lace pattern that mirrors a guayabera's decorations. I chose the shirt as a way to create a parallel with Palomo because she is struggling to find a new way to love him and accept his actions. Conchita's only costume change was for the party, like most other characters. She changes into a red paisley dress, that is flirty and sensual. Ofelia, who previously disliked the dress now thinks "...now that you cut your hair and you look so different, it's actually very becoming," (Cruz 69). Her transformation into a sexual creature causes Palomo additional stress. But, for Conchita she is lifted and excited to have emerged as a new person, she envisions herself as an exotic person saying, "they [paisleys] remind me of gypsies and bohemians," (Cruz 69). In his jealous craze, Palomo tells Conchita that she must end her affair with Juan Julian because "everything has to be killed," (Cruz 74).

Palomo is referred to as "her [Conchita's] husband, forty-one," in the script (Cruz 5). During the first read-through of the script, I wrote Palomo off as a rude and insensitive man, who did not care about his wife and who never changed. However, after meeting with

Emily and Veronica and talking through his character arc, I realized that he is struggling under the weight of the expectations placed upon him. He is having an affair, which is his way of trying to escape some of the pressure he feels. Because he is married to Conchita, the Alcalar family's problems are his problems now. In one of the early scenes where the audience sees Palomo for the first time, he asks Conchita "Is your father in trouble again and that's why...?" (Cruz 30). He is referring to Santiago's gambling problem, and asking of that is the reason that they (Conchita and Palomo) are working after hours. Conchita responds that yes, that is why they are working late, and attempts to start a conversation with Palomo about *Anna Karenina*. Palomo does not respond to the book in the same way Conchita does and that begins a fight. Palomo reveals that he imagines how much easier life would be if they had all the money that the characters in the novel have. Conchita explodes at him and criticizes him for not thinking about the themes and ideas of the book. This is the first time that the audience sees the interactions between Palomo and Conchita, and it is evident that their marriage is strained. Almost immediately after Conchita explains that she wants to have a conversation like the characters in the novel she reveals that she knows that Palomo has a lover. She compares Palomo to Anna because he has a lover, and Palomo is outraged. He tries to deny the affair, but once he realizes that he has been found out he says "Do you want a divorce? We could travel to Reno and be divorced in six weeks, but your family would be opposed to it, and the same with mine. So divorce is out of the question," (Cruz 35). Palomo is clearly feeling trapped, and then Conchita suggests that she could try to love him in a different way. After Palomo discovers Conchita is having an affair as well he becomes a jealous monster, and begins lurking around the factory trying to

figure out when Conchita is meeting with her lover. Because Palomo as a character is trying to deceive everyone around him, his costume was very buttoned up. He wore a long sleeve shirt and slacks with a belt. He wore darker clothes like Cheché, to show his distance from the Alcalars. The most pivotal scene for Palomo's character development arc was Act 2, Scene 2. In this scene, Palomo is breaking down because he cannot stand that Conchita has a lover and he questions her about where and when they meet. He asks what he does to her, how they make love, what kind of things they talk about, and where and when they meet. Conchita is not particularly forthcoming, which makes Palomo even more upset. He is struggling to reconcile his desire to be with Conchita and his desire to get away from her in this scene. Ultimately, Palomo asks Conchita to teach him how to love her the way she needs to be loved. From this intense scene, the show transitions into the upbeat party scene. I carried the same costuming choices from his base look into his party look as well. He wore a dark gray striped guayabera and a straw Panama hat during the party. After the party, Palomo begins to reconcile his feelings for Conchita. In the final moments of the play, Palomo decides to finish reading *Anna Karenina*. The final words of the show are from the book and Palomo reads them directly to Conchita, "By the time he arrived in Petersburg, Anna Karenina's husband was not only completely determined to carry out his decision, but he had composed in his head a letter he would write to his wife. In his letter he was going to write everything he'd been meaning to tell her," (Cruz 84). Palomo is one of the characters who experienced the most growth throughout the story. After a discussion with Veronica, we decided that because Palomo's change of character is the conclusion of the show that he did not need a costume change to accent this character change. I also kept this

in the back of my mind and made small choices that tied him to Conchita throughout the show. Conchita's color palette for the show was cream and navy; I gave Palomo navy accents whenever I could to show that they were going to withstand the trials they were facing.

Cheché is described as "his [Santiago's] half-brother; half-Cuban, half-American, early forties," (Cruz 5). Cheché is one of the characters that is talked about most by the other characters. Cheché's given name is actually Chester and for the entire show, Marela only calls him Chester. She does this to create distance between them. Marela wants to distance herself from him because Cheché is an unsavory and seedy character. At the beginning of the show the audience sees Cheché at the cockfights with Santiago. Cheché reluctantly agrees to lend Santiago money, until Santiago says "If I don't pay you, part of the factory is yours," at that moment Cheché is willing to give Santiago as much money as he wants (Cruz 16). From this interaction it is clear that Cheché is power hungry, he wants more shares of the factory, and later his need for power and control becomes more evident. In the next scene, Cheché is at the factory when Juan Julian arrives for his first day of work, and Cheché continually tries to get Juan Julian to leave. Shortly after Marela reveals why Cheché does not like lectors, and subtextually she reveals why he fights so hard to control the factory and those around him. She says, "His wife ran away from home with a lector...And of course, now Cheché is against all lectors and the love stories they read," (Cruz 21). From this information Marela reveals it is easy to make the connection to the loss of control that Cheché must feel. Later he reveals that he knew something was going on between his wife and the lector and he had planned to move them up North, away from

factories that rolled cigars by hand. "You should move up North to Trenton and start a new life. Take her away from here. That's what I wanted to do with Mildred," (Cruz 66-67). But, before he could implement his plan, she had left. There are a few additional moments throughout the show where the audience sees how emotionally broken and bereft Cheché is. One of them is Act 2, Scene 1 when Cheché breaks down and tells Santiago why he's been feeling so upset and lonely lately. He claims that he misses Mildred and that he hates Juan Julian because every time Juan Julian reads *Anna Karenina* to the workers, he can only think of his wife. Before Santiago can respond, the conversation is interrupted and subsequently ends. This is the turning point for Cheché in the show, from this moment on every action he takes, puts him closer to shooting Juan Julian. Immediately following his emotional confession, Cheché makes a pass at Marela, she rejects him and pushes him down yelling, "Don't you ever touch me again!" (Cruz 58). From this information, it is easy to conclude that Cheché is the outsider in the family, he has the spirit of an American, not a Cuban. He is the symbol of modernity that the family is trying to push out. He constantly talks about how much better factories that are run with machines are, and he eventually brings a stuffing machine into the factory. The workers hate the machine and even Palomo, who is usually on his side thinks that machine is bad for business. Because of his role as the outsider, or 'other' of the group, I chose to costume Cheché in a more 'American' outfit and a darker palette. He wore black slacks, shiny black shoes, a black fedora, and a white shirt with suspenders. He wore his sleeves rolled up to $\frac{3}{4}$ length and wore two buttons undone, he looked very much like a contemporary New Yorker for the time, and not at all like anyone else. Later in the party scene, Cheché makes another pass at Marela, and following her

rejection that time it is implied by the lighting and following scene that he rapes her. For the party scene, he was the only one who wore a traditional American suit and tie. He again stands out from the crowd in this look, reinforcing the idea that he is an outsider and not part of the world. After the party he returns to stage with his tie loosened, shirt unbuttoned, and looking like he has been roaming the streets all night. Back at the factory, Juan Julian was reading from *Anna Karenina* a passage about Anna's husband killing her lover to regain control, and in an extreme case of foreshadowing; Cheché walks on stage and without saying anything shoots Juan Julian in the chest twice. Santiago rushes to him to grab the gun, and after a brief struggle onstage he exits and does not reappear for the remainder of the show. However, in the struggle he drops his hat and it is left on his desk as a reminder of him and his dark deed. Overall, Cheché was an interesting character to design because I needed to make him an outsider in the world, but also draw connections to other characters. For example, I kept him and Palomo in similar, dark color palettes because they have the strongest connection in the show, as they are bonding over their unfaithful wives.

According to Cruz, Juan Julian is "the lector, thirty-eight," (Cruz 5). However, the first thing the audience learns about Juan Julian is that he is very attractive. When Ofelia meets him the first time, she is dumbstruck and speechless. She stares at him open-mouthed until Conchita pushes her to say something. As a lector it is expected that Juan Julian should be well-dressed. Traditionally lectors wore suits to work and removed their jackets when reading to the workers ("Tobacco Factory Lectors, 1910"). According to the text, Juan Julian should wear, "...a Panama hat and a white linen suit," (Cruz 17). Because linen wrinkles very easily, and often is difficult to keep looking neat I opted not to dress him in a linen suit.

I instead chose a tan and cream seersucker 3-piece suit that fit his character. He also wore a white shirt that had a woven pattern that looked like a guayabera to add some interest to his everyday look. He also had a nice straw-like Panama hat with some feathers in the band that he often wore throughout the show. Juan Julian is arguably the most important character in the show, because his arrival is the inciting incident, and his presence and reading bring the other character to life. In a pivotal moment in the show, Conchita asks him to cut her hair and bury it, which is a Cuban tradition. He asks her where he should bury it and they agree to place it in the manuscript of *Anna Karenina* that Juan Julian is reading to the workers. This is the beginning of their affair and the end of the first act of the show. At the opening of the second act Juan Julian reads a passage from *Anna Karenina* about the guilt and shame Anna feels during her affair. Juan Julian asks Conchita if she would be willing to meet him in his room and she objects. They then hear people coming into the factory, so they leave the space. The next time the audience sees Juan Julian he is talking to Cheché about how he needs to help maintain tradition, not bring modernity into the factory. In the party Juan Julian, like the other Cuban characters in the show changes into a guayabera. In this scene Juan Julian reveals part of the reason that he has an affair with Conchita, when he tells Palomo "She came to him because she thought that he could help her...Help her to love again, Help her to recognize herself as a woman all over again...With the lover she learns a new way of loving. And it's this new way of loving that makes her go back to the lover over and over again," (Cruz 68). As mentioned in the introduction, the passages Juan Julian reads from *Anna Karenina* foreshadow events in the story. In Juan Julian's final scene, he is reading a passage where Anna's husband is thinking

about killing her lover to establish himself as the dominant male. Cheché walks in and kills him as he begins a new sentence.

Aside from Juan Julian, Eliades is the only member of the named cast that is not part of the Alcalar family unit. He is described as “local gamester, runs cockfights, forties,” (Cruz 5). As Eliades is only present for the opening scene in the show, his costume relied more on immediate recognition rather than in-depth character analysis. Eliades wore a pair of medium gray slacks, a striped short-sleeve button down, a gray vest, a gold bandana around his neck, and a fedora.

Due to the nature of the movement chorus, or ensemble, I had to work from Veronica’s descriptions of what she was looking for and historical image research. Because of my previous experience working with a developing script, I had a basic idea of how to design for characters with no written text, or descriptions. As I attended designer runs, and rehearsals I took notes about what each member of the ensemble did throughout the show. I also noticed that they had been paired up, so I made sure to keep couples looking like they belonged together. I did this by creating complimentary looks and adding in specific touches like men’s handkerchiefs that matched the ladies’ dresses. I also did not have the resources to create a completely new look for the ensemble during the party, so in collaboration with my assistant designer, we elevated their basic looks with fringed shawls, jewelry, and fans. In collaboration with Jordan Sible, the hair and makeup designer we created floral hair pieces for the women to wear during the party as well. For the men, they had a guayabera for the party with a pocket square that coordinated with their female

partners' looks. I folded these pocket squares into different floral shapes to mirror the flowers the ladies wore in their hair.

Creating a cohesive costume design for *Anna in the Tropics* has been the most challenging task I have undertaken as an undergraduate student. From the beginning I knew I would be designing with constraints with which I had not previously worked; I had a limited budget and limited access to labor. Additionally, this was my first experience working with a fifteen person cast and designing a fully realized period show. However, I believe that these constraints stretched me as a designer and helped me to grow. I learned how important it was to be in constant communication with my collaborators. There were times when I was so overwhelmed that I thought I might not be able to make it through, but meeting with Emily and talking through my process and her experience provided solutions to many of the issues I was facing. Moving through the design process for this project also taught me the importance of following the schedule that Emily creates for each designer because after I had fallen behind in one area, it was nearly impossible to catch back up. However, after re-grounding myself and taking the time to examine what I wanted to accomplish with this design I feel that I overcame many of the challenges I faced.

Through this process I discovered that I am much stronger than I ever believed I was. I worked through an incredibly challenging process. As a less experienced designer I would not have been able to handle the challenged this project placed on me. I approached this design as I had previously done, but this time my previous process did not work. I had to step back and reevaluate my path. I am used to having a more organic communication process with my director and mentor, but on this project the communication was not as

comfortable as I was used to. After discussing with Emily ways to improve my communication abilities the process became so much easier.

I am proud of the costume design I created for *Anna in the Tropics*, and I believe that this has been my most successful design to date. After having taken four years of script analysis classes, and designing a handful of shows I felt that I was able to quickly identify what made each character unique, how they viewed their world and each other, and how their interactions would influence their dress. With the help of the entire creative team, I created 1929 Ybor City, Florida in Muncie, Indiana in 2017 in Strother Theatre. The characters, space, sounds and smells came to life. We told the story of the ending of traditions, the advancement of modernity, and the strength of love. "If there are as many kinds of minds as there are heads, then there are as many kinds of love as there are hearts."

(Tolstoy 108)

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